REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the careful review of this application. Several claims were amended to clarify aspects of the present invention and/or to correct clerical errors. No new matter was added. Claims 4, 5, 8, 10, 20, and 21 have been canceled. Claims 84-89 are new. Claims 1-3, 6-7, 9, 11-19, and 22-89 remain pending in this application.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 8-12, 14-23, 27, 29, 31-35, 45, 46, 48-53, 57, 61-63, 69-71 and 73-80 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nummelin (U.S. Patent No. 6,308,164). Applicant respectfully traverses for the following reasons.

The Prior Art

Nummelin apparently discloses an enterprise project management system that includes a system for creating new projects and adding project tasks and resources to the system. Information used to create the projects, project tasks, and resources is input at a workstation that may or may not be connected to the enterprise network. The information used to create projects, project tasks, and resources includes primary and secondary information. The primary information is essential to the project management system for storing the project, project task, and resource, and for creating or modifying the project schedules. The secondary information is categorization or classification information useful for reporting and is not essential to the scheduling function of the system. The secondary information fields are validated by comparing at least some of them with a set of predefined valid values for each field.

Notably, Nummelin discloses a distributed project management system that merely provides a means for a project to be defined by a first party and then track the progress of that project. That is, an entity that needs to do a project defines the

requirements of the project and that same entity also decides how to meet those requirements. Nummelin's system additionally provides for remote entry of project related data such as a completion of a project task.

The Prior Art Distinguished

Claim 1 includes the language, "receiving a plurality of communications from at least one of a first plurality of business contexts on the network, wherein the business contexts include a virtual space with an associated shared purpose, wherein decisions are made in the virtual space to further the purpose[.]" Applicant respectfully submits that Nummelin does not disclose business contexts as recited in claim 1. Claim 1 further includes the language, "transmitting the plurality of communications, and actions associated with the communications, to at least one of a second plurality of business contexts on the network[.]" Applicant respectfully submits that, e.g., project tasks do not communicate with one another, including actions associated with the communications, as recited in claim 1. Claim 1 further includes the language, "receiving a plurality of responses to the communications from at least one of the second plurality of business contexts[.]" Applicant respectfully submits that, e.g., project tasks do not respond to communications from one to another. Claim 1 further includes the language, "receiving at least one link between at least one of the plurality of responses and at least one of the plurality of communications from at least one of the second plurality of business contexts, wherein the at least one of the plurality of responses facilitates further specifying an aspect of said at least one of the first plurality of business contexts or said at least one of the second plurality of business contexts[.]" Again, e.g., project tasks do not specify an aspect of other project tasks. For any of these reasons, Nummelin fails to teach each element of claim 1.

Claim 23 includes the language, "a module capable of maintaining contexts and links between contexts. created by implicit or explicit communications between contexts[.]" As described with reference to claim 1, Nummelin fails to teach contexts, and links between the contexts. Accordingly, claim 23 is allowable over Nummelin.

Claim 45 includes the language "receiving one or more elements of a business context from a first party[.]" Claim 45 also includes the language, "saving in a database table a record including (1) the message, (2) an identification of the message as a first key to the record, and (3) an identification of the selected element as a second key to the record." As described with reference to claim 1, Nummelin fails to teach contexts, and links between the contexts. Accordingly, claim 45 is allowable over Nummelin.

Claim 57 includes the language, "receiving a selection of an element of a business context from a first party[.]" Claim 57 also includes the language, "saving in a database table a record including (1) the messages, (2) an identification of the conference as a first key to the record, and (3) an identification of the selected element as a second key to the record." As described with reference to claim 1, Nummelin fails to teach contexts, and links between the contexts. Accordingly, claim 57 is allowable over Nummelin.

Claim 69 includes the language, "a first field comprising an identification of an element of a business context[.]" Claim 69 also includes the language, "a third field comprising an identification of an individual that may (1) add, delete, and edit information included in the element, and (2) add, delete, and edit a child element to the element and information included in the child element." As described with reference to claim 1, Nummelin fails to teach contexts, and links between the contexts. Accordingly, claim 69 is allowable over Nummelin.

Claim 71 includes the language, "a second field comprising an identification of an element of a business context as a second key to the record[.]" As described with reference to claim 1, Nummelin fails to teach contexts, and links between the contexts. Accordingly, claim 71 is allowable over Nummelin.

Claim 76 includes the language, "receiving from a first business context a linkage between a response and a requirement, wherein said requirement includes an element of a second business context to be implemented and said response includes a proposal to implement the requirement." As described with reference to claim 1, Nummelin fails

to teach contexts, and links between the contexts. Accordingly, claim 76 is allowable over Nummelin.

Dependent Claims

Claims 2, 9, 11-12, 14-19, 22, 27, 29, 31-35, 46, 48-53, 61-63, 70 and 73-75 and 77-80 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1, 23, 36, 45, 57, 69, 71, and 76, and are allowable at least for the reasons set forth for these independent claims.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 3-7, 24-26, 28, 36-44, 47 and 58-60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nummelin in view of Formenti (U.S. Patent No. 6,487,469). Claims 13, 30, 54-56, 64-68 and 81-82 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nummelin in view of Desjardins (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0059512).

The Prior Art

Nummelin was summarized above.

Formenti apparently discloses a system for project management integration that includes a design database, a schedule database, and an integration module. As described at col. 2, line 66 to col. 4, line 9, "Design database includes design cells that are organized in a hierarchical manner (col. 3, lines 15-16)." "Design cells represent systems, subsystems, devices, components, elements, processes, flows, or other components used in a design (col. 3, lines 2-4)." "For example, a design database may contain a particular module for a design that is being developed. Within that one particular module are expandable modules representing various systems being integrated as part of the design (col. 3, lines 36-40)." The embodiments described by

Formenti include semiconductor design and other design tools applicable to the semiconductor industry.

As described at col. 4, lines 10-53, "Schedule database 30 may further provide the capability of arranging project tasks and sub-tasks in a hierarchical structure linking or showing relationships between such tasks and sub-tasks similar to the tree structure illustrated above in reference to design database 20 (col. 4, lines 27-31)." "Notably, design cells such as those that are not represented by capital letters in the tree structure illustrated above in reference to design database 20 will not have corresponding tasks or sub-tasks in schedule database. As described above, such design cells are standard elements, library components, or other previously developed components and are not cells containing items whose development is an active part of the design project (col. 4, lines 46-53)."

As described at col. 5, line 19 to col. 6, line 6, "Integration module 50 includes software to monitor for and translate changes made to data in design database 20 or schedule database 30 and to determine whether or not such changes need to be reflected in any or both of the remaining databases (col. 5, lines 39-43)."

Thus, according to Formenti, a project manager may design a project that includes available components and to-be-developed components. As the project manager develops the project, the project may include additional available or to-be-developed components (reflecting a change in the design database). The schedule database includes the to-be-developed components as tasks. As the components are developed (reflecting a change in the schedule database), they are incorporated into the project as available components. The integration module modifies the databases to ensure that they correspond to one another. So, if a to-be-developed component is added to the design database, the integration module updates the schedule database to include an associated task. Conversely, if a task is completed, the integration module updates the design database to show that the component is now available.

Notably, Formenti does not describe responses that are used by the project manager to make adjustments to design requirements.

Desjardins apparently discloses a process for developing a project for managing an information technology project that includes a series of principal steps, each of which includes one or more sub-steps. The principal steps may include: (1) assessing the feasibility of the project to determine whether to proceed with the project; (2) performing initial project analysis to determine the project's functional requirements; (3) designing the IT product; (4) building the IT product; (5) testing the IT product; (6) implementing the IT product; and (7) closing-out the IT project, including evaluating the project. A method is also provided for providing, accessing and using the structured process. The method can be implemented using computer technology by storing the information regarding the structured process in a database and using a computer (or network of computers) to access and utilize the information. The computer may include an output device for presenting information regarding the status of the structured process, including an indication of the level of completion of each principal step.

In FIG. 1A, Desjardins disclose a first step 104 in which, among other things, major risks may be identified. At decision point 106, the project is either approved or disapproved. No further evaluation of risks is provided. Thus, although risks may be identified, Desjardins does not describe any identification of mitigation to the risks. It follows that Desjardins does not describe a linking of the mitigation to the risks.

<u>The Prior Art Distinguished</u>

Claim 36 includes the language, "a first list including metadata associated with a business context arranged as nodes in a first hierarchical tree structure, wherein the metadata facilitates decision-making associated with the business context[.]" As noted above with reference to the 102 rejections, Nummelin does not disclose contexts, and links between the contexts. Moreover, Nummelin does not disclose metadata that is used to facilitate decision-making associated with a business context. Formenti discloses a system in which a project manager designs a project, which may include

tasks which are assigned in order to develop necessary components for the project design. Like Nummelin, Formenti does not disclose contexts, links between the contexts, and metadata that is used to facilitate decision-making associated with a business context. Accordingly, Nummelin and Formenti, whether considered alone or in combination, fail to teach each element of claim 36.

Claim 67 includes the language, "a first field comprising an identification of an element of a business context" and "a fourth field comprising a link between the one of the first group and one of the second group." Nummelin does not disclose contexts, links between the contexts, and metadata that is used to facilitate decision-making associated with a business context. Like Nummelin, Desjardins does not disclose contexts, links between contexts, and metadata that is used to facilitate decision-making associated with a business context. Accordingly, Nummelin and Desjardins, whether considered alone or in combination, fail to teach each element of claim 67.

Claim 81 includes the language, "a first list of descriptions of risks associated with a business context" and "a plurality of linkages, each linkage connecting one of said mitigations to one of said risks within the business context." Nummelin does not disclose contexts, links between the contexts, and metadata that is used to facilitate decision-making associated with a business context. Like Nummelin, Desjardins does not disclose contexts, links between contexts, and metadata that is used to facilitate decision-making associated with a business context. Accordingly, Nummelin and Desjardins, whether considered alone or in combination, fail to teach each element of claim 81.

Dependent Claims

For reasons similar to those put forth in regards to Nummelin in the previous section, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3-7, 13, 24-26, 28, 30, 36-44, 47, 54-56, 58-60, 64-68, and 81-82 are allowable.

Claim 72, which depends from claim 71, is believed to be allowable at least for depending from an allowable base claim. Claim 83, which depends from claim 81, is believed to be allowable at least for depending from an allowable base claim.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable. Withdrawal of the rejections of all claims and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The amendment was made to expedite the prosecution of this application. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of the amended claims and reserves the right to re-introduce them and claims of an equivalent scope in a continuation application.

If the Examiner believes that a conference would be of value in expediting the prosecution of this application, he is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned counsel at the number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
Perkins Coie LLP

William F. Ahmann
Registration No. 52,548

Dated: July 27, 2006

Correspondence Address:
Customer No. 22918
Perkins Coie LLP
P.O. Box 2168
Menlo Park, California 94026
(650) 838-4300